



Farm pond near Braunstone,
David Roome

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We've had a busy and successful summer when all our meetings were blessed with fair to great weather, creatures appeared as hoped, many of you were able to take part, and now we're pleased to welcome you to the new edition of *Fieldfare* and the autumn season of activities. Details of the evening meetings and outings till the end of the year are given on page 2. You may have missed the programme card which usually accompanies this *Fieldfare*. It was becoming increasingly difficult to include sufficient information on the card, and your committee have decided to make an annual programme, to give more notice of events which you may wish to attend. This will probably be a separate page arriving with December *Fieldfare*, so that you can pin it up somewhere as a reminder. We also plan to issue separate membership cards as members pay their subscriptions, so watch this space!

We look forward to welcoming you at our first evening meeting on Britain's fungi on October 6 which is followed by the fungal foray on October 10. And don't forget Terry Mitcham's workshop at Fort Henry on September 27th.

Linda Biddle, Chairman

Plea for help with keying *Fieldfare* reports

For various reasons, the number of reports for *Fieldfare* which require keying in has increased, and I would be most grateful for help with these – and you will learn quite a lot of interesting details if you take it on!

Hendrina Ellis, *Fieldfare* Editor

STOP PRESS – congratulations to Phil Rudkin for winning the BAARC Recording of the Year 2015, '*Mobbing the predator*' – recorded at Clipsham Park Woods.

DIARY DATES

RNHS field trips

Full details of all these events can be found on our website at www.rnhs.org.uk. If the weather is bad, please call the 'Queries' phone number in case of cancellation.

Sunday September 27, 9.30 am

Workshop: Water birds

With RNHS Bird Recorder Terry Mitcham, at Fort Henry, Exton. Through the village, past the Buttercross and Home Farm onto the private estate road past Tunneley Wood (we have permission). Meet between the two lakes. (OS grid ref: SK 949 119) Queries: Terry Mitcham on 01780 751268.

Saturday October 10, 2.00–4.00

Fungus Foray at Clipsham Yew Tree Wood

A search for fungi in the wood at the end of Yew Tree Avenue. Dr Vin Fleming, professional mycologist and Chairman and Wildlife Records Officer of the Bourne Group of the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, is leading this field trip. He is also giving the first autumn lecture of the season on October 6, on Britain's fungi, see below.

November

To be announced.

RNHS evening events

The RNHS autumn programme starts on Tuesday 6 October, at Voluntary Action Rutland (VAR), Lands End Way, Oakham LE15 6RB.

Tuesday October 6, 7.30 pm

Earthstars, brittlegills and puddockstools – a look at Britain's fungi.

The first talk of the autumn season is by Dr Vin Fleming, and is followed on October 10 by a Fungal Foray at Clipsham Wood (see above).

Tuesday November 3, 7.30 pm

Lichens

British Lichen Society expert Ivan Pedley gives the second RNHS talk of the season.

Tuesday December 1, 7.30 pm

A year in the life of a wildlife photographer

By Steve Houghton, Wildlife Police Officer and photographer from Leicestershire.

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, Bourne Group

For details of LWT Lincstrust events, see www.lincstrust.org.uk, or phone 01507 526677 in office hours. Bourne events are held at the Methodist Church Hall, Bourne.

Friday October 16, 7.30 pm

From cloud forest to Cotopaxi

James Williams brings us images from the tropical rainforest of Ecuador.

Friday November 20, 7.30 pm

Woodhall Spa Airfield Living Landscapes

Dave Bromwich will speak about the Trust's acquisition of this airfield (one-time home of 617 Dambuster Squadron) and plans to restore heathland and grassland.

Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust, Rutland Group

For events in Leicestershire and Rutland see www.lrwt.org.uk or phone 0116 262 9968. Rutland Group events are held at the Bird Watching Centre, Egleton, entry £1.

Monday October 19, 7.30 pm

Managing woodland for nature conservation

Andy Lear will talk about the general principals of woodland management for nature conservation and show examples of the work the Trust has been doing in their East Leicestershire and Rutland woods.

July 2015

Atmospheric pressure and wind

Pressures this month varied between 998 mb on the 27th and 1027 mb on the 3rd, but for the rest of the month they were generally much of a muchness. Winds were generally SW-W except from the 14th-16th inclusive, when they were NW-NE, and the 29th and 30th when they were NW-N. From the 21st to the end of the month winds were often gusty. Nationally this was a cyclonic month with pressure being some 8 mb below the long term mean.

Temperature

This month started with the highest July maximum I have recorded in the past 25 years. This was 35.6 °C on the 1st, and RAF Wittering recorded 35.3 °C on the same day. Nationally the highest maximum for the month, also on the 1st, was 36.7 °C at Heathrow. Despite this promising start it was in fact quite a cool July; the overall mean was 17.32 °C, which is seventh in the decade 2006–2015, and the main contributor was the minimum figures that mostly brought this about. That mean was 11.24 °C which is 9th in the same decade, only 2011 being lower with 10.55 °C. Towards the end of the month there were some cold nights, the lowest being 5.5 °C on 29th-30th.

Rain

This was eventually a wet month, but it was dry until the last week when 64% of the month's rain fell. The month's total here was 66.5 mm (2.62 in), which is 117% of my LTM. Nationally, averaged over England and Wales, the total was 87.1 mm (3.43 in) or 131% of the normal amount. Only 29 Julys were wetter in the past 100 years.

Memory is notoriously poor as far as past weather is concerned; it seems to have been a dry year but was it in fact? The figures here for the first 6 months give a total of 181.3 mm (7.1 in) which equates to 69% of my LTM, so it has been dry – although the July rainfall has brought the total up to 78% of LTM.

Sunshine

Averaged over England and Wales the total was 188 hours or 99% of the LTM.

August 2015

Atmospheric pressure and wind

This was a month when pressures were fairly uneventful; the highest I recorded was 1025 mb on the 12th, and the lowest 1003 mb on the 26th. This latter was part of a week, the 22nd-28th inclusive, when we were subjected to a low pressure system which brought variable wind directions and some 38% of the month's total rainfall. Unusually for this month visibility was some 300 m at 09.00 hours on the 14th.

Temperature

This was a cool August, both the mean minimum and the mean maximum were fifth in the decade 2006-2015; the former value was 12.17 °C and the latter was 22.89 °C, giving an overall mean of 17.53 °C which by a quirk of mathematics was fourth in the same decade!

The provisional mean for the UK was 14.7 °C, some 0.2 °C below the mean for the standard reference period 1981-2010. The highest national figure was 30.9 °C at Kew on the 22nd, and here it was 30.0 °C on the same day. The lowest minimum here was 7.6 °C on the 15th-16th, but most minima were well above this, the highest being 17.5 °C on the 19th-20th.

Rain

The total I recorded here was 72.6 mm (2.86 in) or 112% of my LTM. The highest daily total was 20.4 mm on the 24th; and this contributed to a wet second half of the month in which 74% of the month's total fell. There were 15 days with no precipitation and a further 5 with no measurable rain. Nationally it was a different picture, being provisionally the wettest August since 1977; and some south coastal countries had twice the normal rainfall. Here both August 2014 (112.2 mm) and August 2010 (135.1 mm) were wetter.

Sunshine

At the time of writing the only information I can find is that it was a dull August.

National figures for July were taken from Philip Eden's Weatherwatch column in the Sunday Telegraph and those for August from the Met. Office website.

AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES RECORDER Dr C H Gallimore

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Your recorder is away; please continue sending in your records.

BIRDS



RECORDER Terry Mitcham

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Falling reservoir levels attracted over twenty wader species – a remarkable total for an inland county, which emphasises the high quality of the bird watching we can enjoy locally. Highlights included breeding Avocets and passage Temminck's and Little Stints, Knot, Curlew Sandpipers and Wood Sandpipers. Wildfowl numbers increased with the onset of autumn with a sprinkling of scarcer species – Garganey, Red-crested Pochard and Common Scoter. Other rare birds noted were Great White Egret, Crane, White-winged Black Tern and Pied Flycatcher with the first Redstarts and Whinchats heralding what we hope will be an exciting and productive autumn.

My thanks to the following for their records: T Appleton, P Bennett, T Caldicott, D Cole, A & J Comber, M & G Griffin, W Halford, P Langston, LROS, R Lemmon, T Moffat, T Mitcham, L Park, P Rudkin, A Tomlinson, L Worrall.

Gadwall	Bred at FHP – a female and two ducklings on 11.07.
Pintail	A female was at FHP on 24 and 29.08, with two at RWEg on 30.08.
Garganey	Up to four (26.08) were at RWEg from 11.07 to the end of Aug. One was at EBR between 14/17.08.
Shoveler	Four pairs bred at RW and one at FHP, where a female escorted 9 ducklings on 18.07.
Red-crested Pochard	Three were at RWEg on 11.08 with four noted on 26.08. Two were at EBR on 24.08.
Tufted Duck	Breeding was confirmed at FHP, EBR (both single broods) and RWEg where at least five broods were seen in late July.
Scaup	One was at RWEg on 09.07, with four the next day and three on 11.07. One was seen on 11.08.
Common Scoter	One was in RWNA on 11.07, with four on 20.07 and singles between 24 and 27.07 and on 14.08.
Bittern	One was on Lagoon 3 at RWEg on 29.07.
Little Egret	55 at RW on 10.07 increased to 76 on 18.08. There were eight at EBR on 12.07 and nine at Banthorpe GP on 28.08.
Great White Egret	One remained at RWEg from 03.07 to the end of Aug, with presumably the same bird at EBR on 30.07.
Black-necked Grebe	One returned to RWNA from 28.08.
Red Kite	Five near Glast on 22.08 was the peak count. One breeding pair, fledging two young, was reported.
Marsh Harrier	At RWEg there was one on 02.07 and two on 11.08.
Sparrowhawk	A pair bred in a Ketton garden and probably fledged two young.
Osprey	Eight pairs bred locally, with roaming birds producing records of three at FHP on 11.07 and five at LFP on 05.08.
Kestrel	Widespread but apparently not as common as previously. Records came from Ext Park/FHP, EW, Emp and EBR.
Hobby	Records were received from LFP, RWEg, and Man up to 28.08.
Peregrine	A pair were vigorously mobbing a Peregrine near Turtle Bridge on 30.07 and one was at RWEg on 29.08.
Crane	One flew over PGW on 19.08.

Avocet	A pair (finally!) fledged three young at RWEg in July and there were two at EBR on 04/05.08.
Lapwing	On 19.07 there were 510 at EBR with 760 at RW mid-July. 213 were at EBR on 16.08 with 727 at RW.
Little Ringed Plover	21 were in RWNA on 01.08 with one or two at EBR on three dates between 09 and 30.08.
Ringed Plover	Up to four were noted at RW during July with numbers increasing steadily in August as passage birds arrived. There were 32 on 26.08 but this was surpassed by a record count of 260 on a wet 31.08. The peak EBR count was 14 on 16.08.
Whimbrel	Singles were at RW on 16 and 21.07 with three at EBR on 21.07, one on 15.08 and two there next day.
Curlew	One was at EBR on 05.07, with singles at RW on 12 and 19.07, and six on 30.08.
Black-tailed Godwit	Regular at both reservoirs in both months, usually in small numbers but 15 at RWEg on 03.07 and 36 on 09.07. The peak count at EBR was nine on 29.07.
Turnstone	Singles were at RW on three dates between 19.07 and 30.08, with three on 21.07 when one was at EBR. Five were at EBR on 14.08 and one on 24.08.
Knot	Singles were at RWNA/Eg on 24/25.07, 4.08 and 25.08.
Ruff	Noted at both reservoirs with the first at RWEg on 21.07. Peak counts were 35 at EBR and 21 at RW, both on 26.08.
Curlew Sandpiper	Three were at EBR on 26.08, one of which had been colour-ringed at the mouth of the River Vistula in Poland. Two remained until 30.08.
Temminck's Stint	One was at RWEg on 13/15.07.
Sanderling	Three were at EBR on 15.07 and singles at RW on 19.07 and 24/25.07. One was at EBR on 14.08 and 20/21.08.
Dunlin	Low numbers were present at both reservoirs from 11.07, with max counts of 15 at EBR on 22.07 and seven at RW on 15.08. A colour-ringed bird at RW on 24.07 had been ringed in Galicia, NW Spain on 08/09.2013.
Little Stint	Singles were at EBR on 23/24.08 and RW on 13.08 and from 22.08 with two on 26/29.08.
Common Sandpiper	Noted at RW from 07.07 and EBR from 15.07 with peak counts of ten at RW on 16.08 and five at EBR on 23.08. One was at Banthorpe GP on 28.08.
Green Sandpiper	Noted at both reservoirs from early July with peak counts of nine at RW on 08.08 and six at EBR on 23.08. One was at FHP on 11.07 with one or two at LFP from 12 to 29.08, and one near Man on 04.08. Two were at Banthorpe GP on 16.08.
Spotted Redshank	One was noted at RWEg between 01.07 and 27.07.
Greenshank	Noted mainly at RW from 01.07 with three on 24.08. Six were at EBR on 24.08.
Wood Sandpiper	Noted at EBR from 09.08, mainly singles but five were present on 15.08. One was at RWNA/Eg from 21.07 onwards with three there on 25.08.
Redshank	Bred at RWEg, where a pair and a downy chick were seen on 05.07.
Snipe	The only records were singles at RWEg on 05.07 and Banthorpe GP on 28.08.
Little Tern	One was at RWNA on 16.07.
Black Tern	Apart from one at EBR on 14.08, all records were from RW where birds were noted from 17.07 to 29.08 with a max of 29 on 22.08.
White-winged Black Tern	A bird in stunning breeding plumage was at RWNA on 19.07. This is the first Rutland record since Sept. 2010.
Sandwich Tern	One was at RWSA on 24.08.
Common Tern	45 were at EBR on 19.07 with just four on 16.08. At RW there were 66 in mid-July and 38 on 18.08.
Arctic Tern	A juvenile was at RWEg on 18.08.
Little Gull	One was at EBR on 11/12.07. At RW singles were noted between 05 and 15.07 and from 14 to 27.08.
Mediterranean Gull	Singles were at RWEg on 16.07, 11.08 and 21.08 with one at EBR on 16.08.
Yellow-legged Gull	23 were at RW on 19.07 with 13 on 18.08.

Caspian Gull	Singles were at RW on 19.07, and 21 and 27.08.
Stock Dove	26 were on stubble at Banthorpe GP on 28.08.
Turtle Dove	One was singing on 01.07 at Leigh – sadly it did not remain.
Barn Owl	One was at Leigh throughout July and a pair were at a Wg nestbox on 12.07. No young have been ringed at any RW nestbox in what is a poor year for this species.
Swift	Breeding sites were vacated, as usual, by the first week in August. Two were at RWEg on 14.08.
Kingfisher	Singles were at FHP on 18.07 and RWNA on 30.08.
Green Woodpecker	Regular at FHP in both months with records also from KQ (fledged young) and Glas.
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	One was calling in BW on 05.07.
Jay	Five were in flight at FHP on 07.08.
Raven	A remarkable 30+ flew from a roost in the west of the county on 03.07. Also noted near Clips and Ryll in Aug.
Coal Tit	c.25 were noted around BW on 09.07.
Willow Tit	Records came from regular sites at RW/Ggorse, LFP, Leigh and Man.
Marsh Tit	Ten were noted in BW on 18.07 with 13 on 07.08.
Swallow	Birds began to gather at LFP from 08.08, peaking at c.220 on 24.08.
Long-tailed Tit	Six were in an Oak garden on 30.07 with two there on 16.08.
Chiffchaff	BW counts were 57 on 09.07 (50 singing) and 68 on 07.08 (five singing). 28 were around Leigh on 24.08.
Willow Warbler	16 were around Leigh on 29.07 with 20 on 31.07 and 18 on 02.08.
Blackcap	A male was in an Oak garden on 11.08.
Lesser Whitethroat	A passage bird was in scrub in Ext Park on 24.08.
Whitethroat	Well distributed with the peak count of 13 singing at Leigh on 01.07.
Grasshopper Warbler	Bushy Wood, Leigh, provided the only records with four singing on 01.07 reducing to three on 24.07 and one on 05.08.
Sedge Warbler	Away from RW, up to three sang at LFP in July with one present to 19.08 with single presumed migrants at Bushy Wood and FHP on 29.08.
Reed Warbler	One held territory at LFP between 24.07 and 22.08.
Nuthatch	Two were in an Oak garden on 17.07 and c.20 were noted around BW on 07.08. Regularly seen and heard at FHP and in Ext Park in both months.
Treecreeper	c. 20 were noted in BW in July and Aug.
Mistle Thrush	24 flew south at Martinthorpe on 30.08.
Spotted Flycatcher	Records came from ten sites with breeding likely at six. Five were at LFP on 19.08 and four at RW/Berrybutts Spinney next day.
Pied Flycatcher	Singles were at RW/Lynd on 11.08 and RWEg on 22.08.
Redstart	An excellent passage began with one at RW/Sykes Lane on 14.08, with birds also at Leigh on 18 and 28/29.08, in Ext Park on 24.08 and RWEg on 30.08.
Whinchat	Singles were at EBR on 26.08 and Banthorpe GP on 28.08, with two at EBR and at Luff Airfield on 29.08.
Wheatear	Singles were at EBR on 31.07 and Luff Airfield on 29.08.
Grey Wagtail	Two were regular at FHP throughout both months.
Tree Pipit	Passage birds were noted over Leigh on three dates between 08 and 24.08 and RWSA on 20.08.
Goldfinch	At Leigh, numbers increased from c.50 on 09.08 to c.100 on 22.08.
Siskin	From 02.07 onwards small numbers (up to nine) were noted over Leigh, RWSA, Man and RWEg. Ten were over BW on 09.07.
Crossbill	Three were in BW on 05.07 with one there on 09.07. Singles were heard over Leigh on four dates between 10.07 and 16.08.
Bullfinch	c.18 were noted around Leigh on 31.07.

Wildfowl Counts – July and August 2015

	Rutland Water		Eyebrook Reservoir		FHP and Exton Park Lake		Banthorpe Gravel Pit	
	July	18.08	19.07	16.08	18.07	15.08	18.07	15.08
Mute Swan	369	472	82	88	10	9	2	5
Greylag Goose	780	615	116	414	19	1	1	
Canada Goose	1000	402	165	54				
Egyptian Goose	118	68		2	5			
Shelduck	18	5	9	2				
Mandarin Duck	3							
Wigeon	5	14						
Gadwall	468	517	5	2	15	34		
Teal	41	236		77		1		
Mallard	980	1194	249	449	78	116	14	24
Garganey	2			1				
Shoveler	16	80		3	2	7		
Red-crested Pochard		1						
Pochard	13	37	1					
Tufted Duck	1407	2690	14	4	29	8		1
Scaup	1							
Cormorant	225	230	7	11	3			
Great White Egret	1	1						
Little Egret	88	76	16	8				1
Grey Heron	22	16	5	2	1	4	1	1
Little Grebe	18	71			1	3		
Great Crested Grebe	192	354	23	56				
Moorhen	101	135	6	1	17	48	4	4
Coot	934	1245	8	18	48	76		
Kingfisher		2						1

BOTANY

RECORDER John Rodgers

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July/August 2015

By now most flowering plants have bloomed and set fruit, so that there are floating seeds everywhere. Some plants will continue to flower and I hope that you will still send in records so that I can determine which are the last flowers and in due course which are the earliest too, for there will be some species flowering early if conditions are right.

A number of recorders, led by Linda Biddle, have been trying to identify which roadside verges are worth concentrating on; work that will continue next year. We haven't been able to record as many verges as in previous years so we need to concentrate on the best. Thank you to those who continue to visit 'their' verges and send in records.

We do receive records from elsewhere from time to time. As part of my trying to learn more about botany I went along to a visit made by the Leicestershire and Rutland branch of the *Botanical Society of the British Isles* (BSBI) to Eyebrook Reservoir, so as to be able to survey the plants in a one kilometre square which has the reservoir in its middle. In the course of two hours, the small group which I was able to accompany, on the Rutland bank of the water, identified 109 plants. As they carried on throughout the day there were probably many more records which we will eventually be able to put into our own records.

Please keep sending your records in. There will be flowers and plants that you can identify when you are out blackberrying or picking sloes. All records are welcome!

BUTTERFLIES

July/August 2015



RECORDER Alistair Lawrence

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I should like to begin my butterfly report with a big thank you to the 36 members and friends who supported my walk at Ketton Quarry on 11 July. The weather was good and we saw 14 species of butterfly including Dark Green Fritillary, Silver Washed Fritillary, Marbled White and newly emerging Gatekeepers.

At the same site on 8 August, Ann Tomlinson found and photographed what appeared initially to be a Northern Brown Argus. However upon further investigation and after receiving advice from Dr Bill Smyllie, the national authority on Brown Argus, it transpires (summarizing the position briefly) that over the years there has been a diffusion of the northern and southern species resulting in Brown Argus hybrids which show a white spot in the centre of the forewing with an elliptical dark spot in the middle. These do appear at a number of sites and have been seen in Rutland in a couple of locations in addition to the normal Brown Argus (see later in report).

Large Skippers have been seen in a variety of locations, many as singletons, but in excess of 20 were counted in fields near Great Casterton on 16 July. There have been some high counts of **Small Skipper**, with 30+ near Great Casterton on 16 July and in excess of 20 at Beaumont Chase Farm, Uppingham, on 5 August. There has been a marked increase in the identification and reporting of the **Essex Skipper** from several sites, with the highest number recorded being 10 at Quarry Farm on 20 July.

Brimstone Reports have been in single figures and come from a wide range of habitats, as the second brood emerges during this period.

Large Whites have been seen regularly, often as singletons, but 6 were observed at Quarry Farm on 16 July and 11 at Beaumont Chase Farm on 5 August. **Small Whites** have been seen in greater numbers as the second brood emerges. Highest count was in excess of 15 at Beaumont Chase Farm on 5 August. **Green Veined Whites** have been recorded less frequently than the previous species and mostly as singletons, but 4 were counted near Caldecott on 19 August.

There have been some new site records for the **White Letter Hairstreak** with singletons being observed at Bloody Oaks Quarry, RW Lyndon and Ryhall during July and the beginning of August.

Small Copper This has appeared more widely during the summer, with sightings at Bloody Oaks Quarry, Caldecott, Great Casterton and RW Lyndon. Highest counts were 4 at Ketton Quarry on 31 July and RW Egleton on 12 August.

Brown Argus Reports come from Bloody Oaks Quarry, Ketton Quarry and Quarry Farm where it has been seen in ones and twos. The hybrid Brown Argus mentioned earlier has been seen and photographed at both Ketton Quarry and Bloody Oaks Quarry during August.

The second brood of the **Common Blue** has resulted in this butterfly appearing in larger numbers, with some high counts from the quarries and reserves. In excess of 16 were recorded at Ketton Quarry on 17 August, and 12 at Clipsham Quarry on 23 August. Only one report has been received for the **Chalkhill Blue**, with a single sighting at Bloody Oaks Quarry on 31 July.

Records of **Holly Blue** come from Oakham and near Walk Farm, Great Casterton, with 3 specimens being seen at the latter site on 13 August.

Red Admiral There have been a handful of sightings, mostly in ones and twos, at Oakham, Market Overton and Whissendine as well as at the quarries during July and August.

There have been a number of sightings of **Painted Lady** during this period, especially at the reserves and quarries, with 3 being seen at Quarry Farm on 17 August.

Reports of **Small Tortoiseshell** sightings all over Rutland have been received with numbers mostly in single figures.

Substantial numbers of **Peacock** have been observed on the wing throughout our area, with 18 at Ketton Quarry on 31 July being the highest count.

The second brood of **Commas** has corresponded, with the number of sightings increasing compared with earlier in the year. 5 specimens were noted at RW Lyndon on 21 July.

The **Dark Green Fritillary** continued to be found at Bloody Oaks, Clipsham and Ketton Quarries, with the 12 the highest number seen during July. 4 were recorded at Clipsham Quarry on 12 August. **Silver-Washed Fritillaries** were mainly seen in ones and twos at Bloody Oaks and Ketton Quarries during this period, but 4 were recorded at the latter site during the Society's meeting there on 11 July.

Speckled Wood Only a handful of reports have been received for this species, with many singleton sightings from Caldecott as well as the reserves and quarries.

Marbled White At the Society's meeting on 11 July at Ketton Quarry, in excess of 120 were recorded, and over 40 on 6 July at Bloody Oaks Quarry. Thereafter numbers dropped and the latest record is of one at Bloody Oaks on 11 August. On 16 July 2 were found along a track near Mounts Lodge, Great Casterton, a possible new site for the species.

Gatekeepers emerged in early July and have been seen in very good numbers throughout Rutland, with the highest count being 37 at RW Lyndon on 15 July. Other high counts were 25 + at Walk Farm, Great Casterton, on 16 July and in excess of 30 at Horn Mill on 19 July. This butterfly was still being seen well into August but in fewer numbers.

Small Heaths have been recorded at a few sites, with 6 being the highest individual totals at Quarry Farm, and near Great Casterton on 1 July and 13 August respectively.

Ringlets have been widespread during this period, with high counts of 60+ and 50+ at Ketton Quarry and Bloody Oaks Quarry respectively during early July. Numbers dropped in August but 13 were counted at Beaumont Chase Farm on the 5th.

My thanks to the following contributors: P Bennett, C Butterfield, T Caldicott, D Cotter, R Favell, M Grimes, C Jones, A Lawrence, R Lemmon, D Masters, D Needham, P Rudkin, B & J Taylor, A Tomlinson, L Worrall



MOTHS

July/August 2015

RECORDER Jean Harvey

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July began with good weather conditions for mothing but cooler and wetter spells moved in by the end of the month. In early August conditions improved again but this was followed by another deterioration in the second half of the month, but there were still the odd mild and humid nights.

A number of records of **Humming Bird Hawk moths** were received from our members. These were seen in gardens in both months, and especially on Buddleia in Manton and Oakham. A **Dusky Sallow** was also seen in Manton, and at Ketton a **Dark Arches** was found in the house.

On July 1st three members of the Leicestershire and Rutland moth group ran 10

traps through the night at Ketton Quarry. This resulted in 3,248 moths of 247 species being identified. This was the third highest species count for one night's trapping in the Vice-county. The highlights were **Buttoned Snout** (1st for the VC) and the **Festoon** (2nd for the VC).

On July 25th Adrian Russell (County Recorder) helped by Ron Follows led a moth evening at Clipsham Quarry as part of the Society's 50 year celebrations. A group of members gathered round a tripod on a very chilly evening and 8 further traps located around the site were opened later yielding a final count of 104 species. The highlight of the evening was the trapping of the **V Moth** which had not been recorded there for a few years and has shown a big decline nationwide. A new micro moth for the site was *Ebulea crocealis* which had only previously been seen in Ketton Quarry in 1993.

Trapping took place at Luffenham Heath Golf Course on July 16th with a total of 174 species which included **Clouded Magpie**, **Reddish Light Arches** and **Dark Spectacle** plus the migrant **Small Mottled Willow**. Two visits there in August saw the arrival of the more uncommon Thorns, namely **August**, **Canary Shouldered** and **September Thorn**.

One visit was made to Eyebrook Reservoir in July when a **Dwarf Cream Wave** was added to the site list. Two visits were made in August, the first of which was a very good night adding three new species. These were the **Least Carpet** and two micros, i.e. *Acleris aspersana* and *Epinotia solandriana*. The second visit at the end of the month yielded only 43 species but included the start of the autumnal moths.

Rutland Water reed beds continued to be checked regularly and in mid-August gave good numbers of **Southern Wainscot** and **Brown Veined Wainscots**.

National Moth night is scheduled for September with a migration theme this year. Let us hope the weather will be reasonable and attract several migrants for moth trappers.

My thanks to: T Caldicott, R Follows, D Masters, A Russell and A Tomlinson

ORTHOPTERA

RECORDER Phil Rudkin

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July/August 2015



Phil at the afternoon session of the 'Insects including Orthoptera' Workshop

To celebrate the Society's 50th year, a series of special events was planned. Ours was on Sunday 9 August, the third of five Workshops, with the title: 'Insects, including Orthoptera'.

27 members attended the meeting, which was held in the Ketton Guide and Scout Hall. The 'Orthoptera' part was mostly after the morning session and lunch. At 2.30 pm, on a hot, sunny afternoon, the group entered the nearby Ketton Quarry reserve. The Orthoptera species were well represented: Speckled Bush Cricket, Long-winged Conehead, Roesel's Bush Cricket, Meadow and Lesser Marsh Grasshoppers. The use of bat detectors for locating and surveying the orthoptera was demonstrated.

The *RW Egleton Reserve Survey* was on 12 August, south of the Bird Watching Centre up to Lax Hill. The four RNHS members had two excellent Trainee Reserves Officers with them, Anya Wicikowshi and Dale Martin. The various very interesting observations are detailed under the entries for Roesel's Bush Crickets and both Slender and Common Groundhoppers. Tim Caldicott had found and identified a Slender Groundhopper on the 4th July, at Gorse Close. Amazingly, these are the first sighting of Groundhoppers on the Egleton Reserve, since John Wright discovered both species on 19 May 2002. The 2015 sightings of the 2 colonies were in exactly the same location as in May 2002. What an experience for Anya and Dale!

Two Farm Surveys were completed during July/August. Our yearly survey at *Beaumont Chase Farm*, Uppingham, was on 5 August, with the kind permission of longstanding members Mary and Joe Nourish. A team of five found the regular species in good numbers. On the 19 August we were invited to carry out

a survey at *Weldon Farm House*, Uppingham Road, Caldecott, by farmer and environmentalist Andrew Brown. This followed on from a Society evening farm walk there on June 11. At 11.0 am, a warm, dry day but 5/8 cloud layer with sunny intervals, Dave Needham (butterflies and dragonflies), and myself (orthoptera), set out. We spent a very rewarding day on the farm. The sightings were all new squares, helping to fill in the map spaces for this southern border of Rutland – see the entries below. Many thanks to Mary and Joe, and Andrew, for allowing us on their land!

BUSH CRICKETS

Dark Bush Cricket *Pholidoptera griseoptera*

Many stridulating males heard in car park waste ground opposite signalbox, Ketton crossing. 28 July, SK984040, new site.

Four stridulating males in rough vegetation at edge of cereal field, Stedfold Lane, Ketton. 29 July, SK993065, new site.

Regular haunts were checked and species were still present, including Aldgate and Verge 7.

Roesel's Bush Cricket, *Metrioptera roeselii*

On the RW Egleton Reserve Survey (see introduction), August 12, were found large numbers of Roesels in the usual habitats. Macropterous forms, a male and a female, were found by Anya and Dale.

On the Weldon Farm House Survey (see introduction), August 19, Roesels were found in large numbers in many habitats: rough herbage in the ditches, SP876943, new site; by second gate, the old railway line and the adjacent nettle beds, SP878945, new site; in 6-metre margins next to conservation woodlands, SP879943, new site; smaller numbers were heard (and some observed) in the verges next to the River Welland (county boundary) and along the ditches, SP883941, new site.

The Beaumont Chase Farm Survey (see introduction), 5 August, found all areas well inhabited by Roesels.

Elsewhere in Rutland, numbers were healthy in the usual haunts: Quarry Farm Stamford, Horn Mill Exton, Ketton Quarry, Bloody Oaks, Wing Burrows and Wing Fishing Lakes.

Long-Winged Conehead *Conocephalus discolor*

Photos of a male nymph and two female nymphs at Leighfield Fishponds sent in by Tim Caldicott, 31 July, SK831037, new site.

On the Weldon Farm House Survey (see introduction), August 19, Long-Winged Coneheads even outnumbered Roesels! It is usually the reverse. They were in the same places as the Roesels, see map references above.

Elsewhere in Rutland, numbers were healthy in the usual haunts, as for the Roesels: Quarry Farm Stamford, Horn Mill Exton, Ketton Quarry, Bloody Oaks, Wing Burrows and Wing Fishing Lakes.

Short-winged Conehead *Conocephalus dorsalis*

This cricket still remains an enigma! The populations at the stronghold (Egleton Reserve) have their seasonal ups and downs, however, 2014 and the current year (2015) have been up. The Egleton Reserve Survey, 12 August, revealed 5 stridulating males, on the grassy bank surrounding the small pond, followed up by a large colony found in a rough grass corner of field, next to Snipe Hide. We have found no other colonies this season so far, away from the Rutland Water Complex!

Speckled Bush Cricket *Leptophyes punctatissima*

On the Weldon Farm House Survey (see introduction, August 19, two important new sites were established for this species: large numbers were located with the bat detector at 35 kHz in Blackthorn hedgerows adjacent to the conservation woodland, SP881941; about 4 stridulating in Ash tree down by the Welland (county border), SP883941.



Female Speckled Bush Cricket,
Becky Corby

Glaston Tunnel Top, 5.30 pm, 22 August, revealed 9 stridulating in Ash and Hawthorn (on the east side of the bridge) and 6 in Hawthorn (on the west side), SK896015, new site.

Regular haunts had the usual high numbers: Verge 7 Great Casterton, Bloody Oaks, Horn Mill Exton, Aldgate.

GROUNDHOPPERS

Slender Groundhopper *Tetrix subulata*

Gorse Close (south of Lax Hill), Egleton reserve, 4 July, Tim Caldicott found one.

On the RW Egleton Reserve Survey (see introduction), August 12, Anya and Dale found these tiny hoppers at the edge of a small reedy pond, south of the Birdwatching Centre. Further investigation revealed a sizeable colony. This was the first sighting of this species on this reserve since John Wright's on 19 May 2002, amazingly with the same grid reference, SK882067.

Common Groundhopper *Tetrix undulata*

On the RW Egleton Reserve Survey (see introduction), August 12, Richard Brown was the first to see one of these tiny hoppers, and Anya and Dale followed on with a few more, thus establishing that there was a colony at the small reedy pond, SK882067. As above, these had last been seen by John Wright on 19 May 2002.

GRASSHOPPERS

Common Green Grasshopper *Omocestus viridulus*

Despite the name, this grasshopper remains uncommon in Rutland.

Gorse Close (south of Lax Hill), Egleton reserve, 2 July, one stridulating male, SK880061, new site.

Weldon Farm House Survey, August 19, four stridulating males in sheep pasture, SP876943, new site.

Beaumont Chase Farm Survey, 5 August, one caught and identified and 3 stridulating males, in thick grasses in the Rabbit Bank field, SP841993, new site.

Field Grasshopper *Chorthippus brunneus*

Leighfield Fishponds, 10 July, one observed on gravel track, SK831037, new site.

Cottesmore Railway Museum, 20 August, three observed on grassy fringes in car park area, SK886137, new site.

Meadow Grasshopper *Chorthippus parallelus*

Common and widespread in Rutland!

Bloody Oaks, 8 August, Roy Edwards sent in a photo of a female nymph. This reserve is a stronghold for this species.

On the Weldon Farm House Survey (see introduction), August 19, large thriving populations were found: 11.20 am, in the sheep pasture near the farm house, SP876943, new site; 12.40 pm, in the grasses on the old railway line and the nearby grassy banks, SP878945, new site; 1.15 pm, in the rough herbage of the 6 metre margins adjacent to the conservation woodland, SP881941, new site.

All the regular haunts held excellent populations: Beaumont Chase Farm, Bloody Oaks, Horn Mill Exton, Egleton (survey), Quarry Farm Stamford, Ketton Quarry.

Lesser Marsh Grasshopper *Chorthippus albomarginatus*

Common and widespread in Rutland!

On the Weldon House Farm survey, 19 August, fewer numbers were encountered than expected. All sightings are new sites! Five stridulating males in the sheep pasture near the farm house, SP876943, new site. Fifteen stridulating males and 2 courtship pairs, in the rough herbage of the old railway line, SP878945, new site. Improved numbers located in the rough herbage of the 6 metre field margins, adjacent to the conservation woodland, SP879943, new site.

Clive Jones reports from Cottesmore Railway Museum, on 20 August 'very common on grassy fringes in the car parking area', new site, SK886137.



Regular haunts visited: numbers generally slightly down on previous years, including Egleton Reserve survey, Beaumont Chase Farm survey, Horn Mill Exton, and Bloody Oaks.

Many thanks to the following for their sightings: R Brown, T Caldicott, D Cotter, R Edwards, M Grimes, C Jones, R Lemmon, D Martin, D Needham, C Nelson, P Rudkin, A Tomlinson, A Wicikowshi.

OTHER INSECTS AND INVERTEBRATES RECORDER Gill Chiverton

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July 2015

ODONATA Damselflies

Emerald damselfly *Lesetes sponsa* – 3 records at Leighfield Fishponds of two on the 1st, five on the 3rd and nine on the 10th.

Red-eyed damselfly *Erythromma najas* – 4 recorded at Leighfield Fishponds.

Common blue damselfly *Enallagma cyathigerum* – several noted near RW osprey, redshank and tufted duck hides, a good number recorded at Oakham Canal, a male and a female noted at Woodside Farm verge and two specimens recorded at Ketton Quarry.

Blue-tailed damselfly *Ischnura elegans* – several recorded at Oakham Canal.

Migrant hawk *Aeshna mixta* – one female note at RWEgleton.

Southern hawk *Aeshna cyanea* – several noted at RWEgleton and also recorded at Barnsdale Gardens.

Brown hawk *Aeshna grandis* – noted at Barnsdale Gardens, male and an egg-laying female recorded Oakham Canal and one recorded Ketton Quarry.

Emperor dragonfly *Anax imperator* – noted on two occasions at Oakham Canal where egg-laying was recorded, and male and female recorded at Barnsdale Gardens.

Four-spotted chaser *Libellula quadrimaculata* – noted at RWLyndon.

Broad-bodied chaser *Libellula depressa* – noted a RWEgleton.

Black-tailed skimmer *Orthetrum cancellatum* – recorded at RWEgleton.

Common darter *Sympetrum striolatum* – recorded at Oakham Canal.

Ruddy darter *Sympetrum sanguineum* – several noted at RWEgleton.

Scorpion fly *Panorpa sp.* – two recorded at Ketton Quarry.

Ground beetle *Carabus nemoralis* – one recorded at Ketton Quarry.

Soldier beetle *Cantharis rustica* – observed in good numbers at Ketton Quarry.

Swollen-thighed beetle *Oedemera nobilis* – one male noted at Ketton Quarry.

22-spot Ladybird *Psyllobora 22-punctata* – one noted on willow at RWLyndon.

7-spot Ladybird *Coccinella 7-punctata* – one noted on set-aside near Verge 7, two on Verge 8, two + 5 larvae on Woodside Farm verge, and 14 Ketton Quarry.

Twin-lobed deerfly *Chrysops relictus* – one recorded at Ketton Quarry.

True Dragonflies



Gill Chiverton and Dave Needham at the morning session of the 'Insects Including Orthoptera' Workshop

MECOPTERA Scorpion Flies

COLEOPTERA Beetles

DIPTERA True flies

HYMENOPTERA Bees, Wasps, Ants

Honey Bee *Apis mellifera* – <5 seen nectaring at Ketton Quarry.

White-tailed bumble bee *Bombus lucorum* – one recorded at Ketton Quarry.

Common carder bee *Bombus pascuorum* – four recorded at Ketton Quarry.

Red-tailed bumble bee *Bombus lapidarius* – two records of several insects at Ketton Quarry.

Cuckoo bumble bee *Bombus rupestris* – very large specimen noted Ketton Quarry.

August 2015

ODONATA Damselflies

Banded demoiselle *Calopteryx splendens* – one recorded at Ryhall, one male noted at Oakham Canal.

Emerald damselfly *Lesetes sponsa* – two recorded on two occasions at Leighfield Fishponds, one noted at RWEgleton and one noted at Burley Wood.

Common blue damselfly *Enallagma cyathigerum* – recorded at RW near volunteer centre, and recorded at Oakham Canal.

Blue-tailed damselfly *Ischnura elegans* – recorded at Oakham Canal.

Migrant hawk *Aeshna mixta* – recorded at Barrowden.

Southern hawk *Aeshna cyanea* – recorded at Barrowden, RWEgleton and Barnsdale Gardens.

Brown hawk *Aeshna grandis* – recorded at Oakham Canal, RWEgleton and Barnsdale Gardens.

Emperor dragonfly – recorded at Barrowden and Oakham Canal.

Black-tailed skimmer *Orthetrum cancellatum* – one noted at RWEgleton.

Common darter *Sympetrum striolatum* – recorded at Oakham Canal and RWEgleton.

Ruddy darter *Sympetrum sanguineum* – one noted at RWEgleton, one noted at Oakham Canal and several recorded at Barrowden duck pond.

22 spot Ladybird *Psyllobora 22-punctata* – 3 recorded at Bloody Oaks Quarry.

7-spot Ladybird *Coccinella 7-punctata* – one recorded at Bloody Oaks Quarry and one noted in an Oakham garden.

Hoverfly *Volucella inanis* – one recorded at RWEgleton.

True Dragonflies



Emperor dragonfly, Dave Cotter

COLEOPTERA Beetles

DIPTERA True flies

HYMENOPTERA Bees, Wasps, Ants **Yellow meadow Ant** *Lasius flavus* – one active dome nest observed at Bloody Oaks Quarry; observer noted 'many pupae and workers, together with many winged males – none seen taking off'.

Digger wasp *Ectemnius continuus* – one specimen at Beaumont Chase Farm.

Ground nesting bee *Melitta leporina* – one specimen recorded at Ketton Quarry (captured for ID examination near abundant melilot plants).

Spined mason bee *Osmia spinulosa* – one specimen recorded at Ketton Quarry.

Red-tailed bumble bee *Bombus lapidarius* – good nos. of workers at Bloody Oaks Quarry and one queen observed at Ketton Quarry.

White-tailed bumble bee *Bombus lucorum* – <4 noted at Bloody Oaks Quarry and one recorded at Beaumont Chase Farm.

Common carder bee *Bombus pascuorum* – <5 seen at Bloody Oaks Quarry.

Many thanks to the following observers: J Ansley, P Bennett, T Caldicott, G Chiverton, D Cotter, H Iken, R Lemmon, D Perril, S Woodward and L Worrall.



Spined Mason Bee

GLOW-WORMS

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In the *Fieldfare* for May 2015 I suggested we might try, as an extra or different venture, to check out a few areas where we have thought it worth looking for glow-worms over the years but have not found any, such as Empingham and Bloody Oaks Quarry, and Fineshade Woods where we used to see many, but haven't been recently. Potential first time hunters were specially urged to check out anywhere they felt there might be some, which no-one yet knew about. I would not call the enterprise a great success, which rather confirms how lucky we are to have any at all. Potential reasons for a shortage of glow-worm numbers include weather, snails, whether mating was successful two years ago and how larvae have fared, also

farming practices, management of woods, verges and grassland. And, of course, people do need to go seeking in the dark at the same place and time that glow-worms have the same idea!

Barrowden, Verge 17, SK945003 Back Road, and **Verge 3**, SK948005 Luffenham Road

Barrowden glow-worms had fair numbers and a good audience – I kept being told about glows when I was in the village shop, by email, and when casually meeting folk. The Recreation Ground was re-checked, to no avail. As last year, a householder in the new Drift Close, off Back Lane, removed his green solar garden lights in good time. One glow was seen a foot up a frontage nearby. The Parish Council liaised with Rutland County Council and Luffenham Road was not mown during the season, allowing glows between 15th June and 26th July, though a maximum of only 4 were spotted. Back Road was trimmed by the farmer round field entrances as usual in early preparation for harvest; he also cut part of a hedge. Disturbingly, no glows were seen this year along the refuge of the long thick field hedgerow up to the A47, where the farmer takes a wide access cut. Also at the end of June, the Parish Council's village verge cutters mistakenly took one swathe, and glows subsequently were on grass nearer the back of the verge.

However, I was most kindly provided by a villager with detailed records and the following account of being a first-time hunter:

Enlightenment



Female glow-worm, Dave Scott

It was a dark and windy night when my wife and I first went glow-worm hunting. Not having a clue as to what, exactly, we were looking for, nor quite where to look, it was no surprise to us that we didn't see any. A pedant might chip in: "If you didn't know what you were looking for, how do you know that you didn't see any?" This is about how we know we didn't, that first night.

As newcomers to Barrowden, we were enlightened to learn that our new home was host to a rare and normally shy beetle, the glow-worm. A few weeks later, one of our new neighbours gave us a copy of the parish magazine, where we were introduced to glow-worms. After reading the article, I was intrigued, never having seen such a beast. I persuaded my wife to come out, late at night, and we wandered the roads of the village in early June. But we saw nothing that resembled the description, although we peered excitedly at several white wild flowers, trying to convince ourselves they might be glow-worms.

A few days later, 11th June, some of our family came to visit for a week, and I dragged them out with me. And YES! We saw one! Now I knew what I was looking for, which is why I know we didn't see any that first night – amazingly, they really do glow bright green. Being an inquisitive chap I did a little research and could not, and still cannot, understand how such an insect could survive. Then, I found myself hooked.

As the June nights remained warm I was out almost every night, usually dragging some reluctant visitors along too. The numbers of glow-worms slowly increased, and were to be found in the same areas night after night – the northern verge of Back Road, between the field entrance and Drift Close, and also along the western verge of Luffenham Road. Then we started finding them in other places too. There was at least one in long grass on the southern verge of Back Road, opposite the field entrance, which I saw for several consecutive nights, and then my wife reported one on the verge right outside our house in Back Road.

Normally we would see about half a dozen each night, with a peak sighting of 13 on the evening of 3rd July, including a few on the eastern verge of Luffenham Road. After the peak in early July, numbers diminished. On 26th July I dragged my 12 year old grandson out, and we spotted one, last, glow-worm, in the eastern verge of Luffenham Road, close to the village sign. So, maybe, a seed of interest has been sown before the teenage years kick in.

I was lucky enough one night to see a pair of glow-worms mating on the outward walk from my home; then on the return walk, the female's light had gone out and she had moved off, presumably to lay her eggs. Now, we have to wait two years before we see the results of the display by this year's females.

Next year, adult females from eggs laid last year will glow, hopefully in even greater numbers, so make a date in your diary for nocturnal ramblings! Just remember to carry a torch and wear a reflective jacket or something light coloured for safety.

Ronald Fraser

Bloody Oaks Quarry, SK970108 As no glow-worms had been recorded it was checked: none found.

Essendine, Verge 5 and Mainline cutting top, TF943129

5.7: 1 in cutting top, grass very high and more may have been present. **2** on verge adjacent, which had been cut front to back some time ago and was extremely dry.

Pickworth Great Wood near Holywell Wood, SK985150

26.7: Tracks checked, as a known site some years ago: none found.

Tixover, SK976005

17.6: In a garden, at least 1 on riverside bank near a new stone wall. **18.6:** 1 in garden next door in same crack in steps as last year.

Outside the County

Fineshade Top Lodge, Northants, SP980982

2.7: 1 near gatepost of a house; **4.7:** possibly the same one but now just inside garden. **Also 4.7:** 1, six inches above ground level on stonework of Forestry Commission offices of Top Lodge itself. The observer wondered how many of its predecessors had glowed there since the house was built in the 18th century.

Many thanks to: A and L Biddle, A and G Chiverton, R and V Fraser and Barrowden villagers, B Galpin, B Murie, P Rudkin, L Worrall.

PLANT GALLS

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July 2015

A good month for plant galls, some 82 reports from 8 sites around the county. A set-aside margin in Great Casterton produced 8 records on the fifth, including 'white rust' on Shepherd's Purse. This is not a rust and due to the shifting nature of classification is now not even a fungus, being placed in the Chromista. Yew Tree Avenue Clipsham on the 9th gave another 8 records including the powdery mildew on Meadowsweet, 'choke' on False Oat grass and a real rust on Hawthorn. This latter wasn't completely obvious but an external referee confirmed it.

The RNHS Verge group visit to Verge 15 at Thistleton on the 9th produced just 4 records, all run-of-the-mill but this isn't an area from which we get many records so it fills in a few gaps. The RNHS butterfly meeting at Ketton Quarry on the 11th, as well as butterflies produced 9 records and a visit to Lax Hill on the 22nd a further 18. Among these was the Hawthorn rust referred to earlier and a 'nail' gall on Small-Leaved Lime. This looks just like a small nail sticking out of the leaf and is caused by a mite.

The final report of the month, on the 30th from Lyndon, gave some 17 records including the Hawthorn rust as well as some 2 galls in Oak. Normally this is one of the best gall hosts but this year, at least so far, it isn't living up to its reputation.

August 2015

A much quieter month with 33 records from 8 sites. BOQ on the 1st had 3 records including the rust on Hairy Violet, and the dipping pond at Eggleton Visitor Centre had a mite gall on Alder. The Society's Verge group visited two sites at Normanton on the 11th and found 13 galls, all fairly standard but useful for filling in the picture across the county. Verge 7 on the 13th saw 9 records including a fly gall on Common Knapweed, which is detected by rolling the flower between the fingers and if it is 'lumpy', further examination will reveal the fly grubs within.

BOQ on the 20th had 4 records including a psyllid (jumping plant louse – I don't make this up!) gall on Buckthorn and another fly gall, this time on Creeping Thistle, which appears as a large swelling on the stem, quite common this year. The same gall was reported from Clipsham Quarry on the 22nd, and on the 26th there was a report of a rust gall on Wild Pear from Oakham.

The final report of the month, a singleton, was of a mite gall on Crab Apple near the Volunteer Centre at Rutland Water.

Thanks to P Bennet, G Chiverton, M Grimes, A Lawrence, R Lemmon and R N Stringer (BPGS) for their input.

MAMMALS

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July/August 2015

In July a determined **Stoat** was the source of great entertainment for a group of golfers at Greetham Valley Golf Club, when it was watched for some time, jumping up and down, trying in vain to climb the pole to get to the flag on top of the pin in the middle of a green! Later two stoats were seen chasing a leveret in the same area. A stoat carrying prey was observed near the allotments on Land's End Way, Oakham.

Three **Weasels** were seen together at the same golf club in early July, and in August one was observed playing in sand in a bunker next to a mouse hole. At RWNR a weasel crossed the perimeter track near Lagoon 4.

Badgers have been very busy this summer, and at Langham one at least has been a regular visitor to the garden of Marian Markham, on almost every night in July and August (21 nights each month). Sometimes badgers appear more than once per night (or of course it could be 2 individuals coming separately). One night a **Hedgehog** was busy eating a dog biscuit when the badger arrived and was so keen to get hold of the biscuit that he (or she) pricked his nose on the hedgehog twice. The hedgehog retreated into a tight ball and remained so until the badger left. At the end of July at 10.30 pm a badger arrived, and was captured on camera but didn't stay long. A **Fox** called in at the garden at 11 pm, but the badger returned at midnight, and the fox left. At 2.00 am when the badger left the fox returned. The fox appears to ignore the hedgehogs, which are also present on every night.

On walking alongside crops of wheat this summer we have on many occasions seen little piles of straw and husks at the edge of the field as though something has been carefully eating heads of corn. We were puzzled, as to whether it could perhaps be hares, rabbits or maybe even crows. Phil Rudkin spotted some badger droppings at Beaumont Chase Farm, which contained a large proportion of wheat, and Dave Needham observed a similar thing at Ketton Quarry, and photographed them. So we now have a strong suspicion that badgers are the culprits! The dry early summer would mean that earthworms were hard to find, and a crop of wheat is easy food.

A badger was also at Greetham Valley Golf Club, where setts have been active. **Hares** must find golf courses very suitable places to live, or at least feed, as two were reported in early July at Luffenham Heath, and others are regularly seen at Greetham Valley. Hares are also reported from Pickworth, Great Casterton, Exton Park, and there are two resident below Lax Hill at RWNR.

Apart from the regular fox visitor at Langham a fox and cub were seen at Ketton Quarry in mid July, and at Banthorpe a fox crossed the track which leads down to the gravel pit. In the same area, a month later a very dark **Mink** was seen at the edge of the gravel pit. Fox droppings were found at Beaumont Chase farm on a grassy bank frequented by **Rabbits**. A small rabbit was seen at Ketton Quarry, where there is a healthy population, no doubt supplying prey for the foxes.

A large bream was found part eaten by the side of the lower lake at Fort Henry in July, evidence for a visit by an otter. At RWNR the mink raft at Dog Kennel Cottage has again been scratched out by an otter, but there has been a fairly quiet period, with little evidence of them visiting other mink rafts and spraint marking.

Hedgehogs, as well as being regular visitors to the garden at Langham, have continued to visit Linda Worrall's garden in Barrowden, visiting in twos and threes throughout the summer, and several 'hedgehog nests' have been found in the large wooded garden of a cottage in the village.

A **Short-tailed Field Vole** was found under a reptile shelter at Exton Park, and two

Bank Voles have been seen, one at Beaumont Chase, and the other in Pickworth Wood.

Muntjac deer have been reported from Beaumont Chase, RWNR and Langham, where they have grazed the lower branches of plum and cherry trees. **Fallow** are reported from Pickworth Wood, Walk Farm plantation and Lincolnshire Gate, where 4 females and 2 fawns browsed at the edge of Holywell Wood. A **Roe Deer** was seen in a corn field at Great Casterton.

Thank you for all your reports: D Cotter, M Grimes, W Halford, C Jones, P Langston, R Lemmon, M Markham, T Mitcham, D Needham, J Ostler, P J Rudkin, L Worrall.

BATS

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May to August 2015

Looking back to the spring, although the weather was unusually dry, and we seemed to have quite a few warm, sunny days in May and June, the nights were cold and insect numbers were down. To compound the problem for insects and insect-eaters, a heat wave at the beginning of July was followed by a break in the weather with cold, wet conditions for the second half. I believe that this led to many baby bats being born much later than usual and juveniles being weaned with low body weight. This report is an 'edited highlights', with more details to be available in the *Annual Report*.

There have been very few bat records from members, but Alan and Julie Comber have been seeing bats regularly over their Oakham garden; strangely though no soprano pipistrelles. I have also not been out bat-watching very much this year, with the exception of bat rescue and release, and the memorable bat detector workshop on 27th August. However, common and soprano pipistrelles have frequented my garden in small numbers. On one occasion, several sopranos were feeding in the lea of a large *Leylandii* hedge, with many 'feeding buzzes' heard.

Roost counts

Six maternity roosts were counted for the National Bat Monitoring Programme during June and July, in most cases with an increase in numbers of adult female bats occupying these breeding roosts, although there has been some bad news too. At All Saint's Church, Braunston, the peak June count of soprano pipistrelles was 429 on 17.6 but on 30.7 this had risen to 694, which would have included newly-weaned juveniles. Treatment of a bees' nest at the top of the north wall of the nave was carried out with appropriate advice to avoid harm to the bats. The soprano pipistrelle roost at Rutland Watersports, Whitwell, contained no bats this year, although it is thought they may be roosting in a different part of the building. Counts of the large soprano colony at the Fox and Hounds in Exton, which has given such pleasure to RNHS members and villagers, and which last year peaked at over 700 bats, recorded a maximum of just three bats in June. It is believed that major internal renovation and redecoration has been carried out. There was a large increase in the number of soprano pipistrelles counted at St. Edmund's Church, Egleton; the number may have been augmented by bats from the former maternity roosts at Whitwell and Exton.

The mixed roost in Wing had 15 brown long-eared bats and 21 common pipistrelles in July, and there was a better count of Natterer's bats at Whissendine church, 45 adult bats, than has been recorded for several years. The small Natterer's breeding colony at Stoke Dry Church once again proved difficult to count, as the bats use a number of entrances, and 20 to 30 bats were recorded.

Nathusius' Pipistrelle survey

There have been two surveys for the National Nathusius' Pipistrelle Survey at Rutland Water. In August, more than 120 bats of five species were caught on the 8th, using three harp traps around the Hambleton Peninsula. Of these, three were Nathusius' pipistrelles, but all were males, dashing hopes of being able to radio-track a female to the breeding roost. All were ringed, fur samples taken and, where possible, droppings collected for DNA analysis. Also caught that night were two noctules, several Daubenton's, two common pipistrelles and a number of soprano pipistrelles. On 5.9 ten bats were caught, including two Nathusius' pipistrelles,

again both males, but one of them was a re-trap from last year. A Daubenton's, a Brandt's, two Natterer's and four sopranos completed the total.

Grounded bats

There has been a sharp increase in the number of grounded bats around Leicestershire and Rutland as a whole, with ten recorded in Rutland (full details will be in the next *Fieldfare*). In early July, a small soprano pipistrelle was found outside Braunston church, and after intensive feeding, it was returned to the roost there, being placed close to the entrance where it quickly crawled inside. Also in July, a juvenile pipistrelle that was probably just flying was found in a garden at Belton-in-Rutland. The owners had no idea they had a roost in the roof, but listening with the bat detector soon identified the ridge as the site of the roost and at dusk bats began to emerge. The juvenile was released and quickly flew towards the roost entrance, probably able to hear the squeaking of bats still inside. The owner described the bat's flight as looking a bit like a drunken teenager, but he soon got better and disappeared over nearby gardens. In August a brown long-eared from Braunston had been a cat victim, and although an open wound on its abdomen soon healed after being cleaned with salt solution and dressed with dilute honey, it had two broken finger bones and so was humanely put down. This was sad because it was a female that had bred this year. A juvenile male BLE caused a bit of consternation in Boots the Chemist, Uppingham, but was fit and eager to go so was released in the nearby churchyard.

Bat detector workshop

The RNHS meeting at Lyndon Hill Visitor Centre was run as an introduction to finding bats, using bat detectors and assessing habitats where bats are most likely to be found. We had a brief 'classroom' session inside, then set off for Gibbet Gorse. Next to the wood there is a small field of rough grass, with a line of tall poplars on the south side and bounded by the hedge to the service track on the north. This is a very sheltered, insect-rich habitat, and we had a wonderful display of sights and sounds by several noctule bats, common and soprano pipistrelles. Lots of feeding buzzes were heard and the large noctules could be seen against the darkening sky. A possible Nathusius' pipistrelle was also heard briefly. Walking back along the service track, we were accompanied by almost constant pipistrelle sounds, and at Teal Hide, near the centre, we heard Daubenton's bats, both close in front of the hide and sometimes skimming the surface far out on the reservoir. Our thanks to Tim Mackrill for making the Centre and its facilities available to us for the evening.

Other records

Common pipistrelles were seen and heard at Whissendine church during the Natterer's count on 24.6 and Tim Caldicott had a probable Natterer's over his garden. It has been disappointing that I have not had time to go batting in Burley Wood, or to some of the unrecorded 'blank spots' on the map of Rutland to search for bats, but there have been compensations. My most exciting bat experience occurred when I returned a grounded long-eared bat to North Luffenham. Getting out of the car next to the cricket ground, I switched on the bat detector and immediately could hear noctule bats. The closely mown grass pitch was surrounded by lime and horse chestnut trees; a number of noctules were criss-crossing the area hunting for cock chafer beetles, coming very close to the ground. The noise on the detector was amazing, but this was no place to release a quiet, slow-flying long-eared bat. So I took her off to the churchyard on the other side of the village.

My thanks to: I and L Burger, T Caldecott, A and J Comber, P and M Coughlan, C Gallimore, A Tomlinson, J Whiteford, J Bryan at RW Egleton, and everyone who came on the bat workshop.

RIVERS

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No report this time, but check out the photos overleaf!



Chub, David Roome



Roach, David Roome



Small pike, David Roome



Common Carp, David Roome

NB These could be very useful for those on the Osprey Project! Roy Edwards

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Wildlife Recorders

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